

CITATION FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

ANTHONY D. LÉGER

We present this citation to Anthony D. (Tony) Léger in recognition of his significant contributions to the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Innovation, vision, courage, and an unyielding dedication to wildlife conservation are the trademarks of Northeast Regional Refuge Chief Tony Léger. Since 1977, Tony has faced many challenges in his pursuit to conserve wildlife and their habitats in the highly populated Northeastern United States. With determination and optimism, Tony has undertaken and excelled at nearly every task that occurs on a refuge, including law enforcement, visitor services, habitat enhancement, land protection, fire management, and outreach and communication.

Tony is known as a strong advocate for sustainable practices and encouraging and financially supporting stewardship. Tony has been an effective advocate for developing standard designs for national wildlife refuge facilities. This paradigm shift, which accomplishes planning and construction around consistent floor plans and building exteriors, has already saved American taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. This approach has now evolved into a Director's Order mandating the use of the Service's suite of facilities for all National Wildlife Refuge System facilities. Under his leadership, refuges in the Northeast are employing wind and solar power generation, ground-source heating and cooling systems, and "green" facilities using sustainable materials and practices. As a result, national wildlife refuges in the northeast received the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Environmental Achievement Award in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Tony is also a tireless advocate for making decisions based on strong science. He diligently and consistently works to provide field staff with the resources they need to fund strategic science needs in order to achieve our collective mission. He established a cross-regional monitoring and database initiative, and funded multi-refuge studies on management for grassland nesting birds, salt marsh integrity for coastal refuges, and the future of impoundment management in coastal areas. Under Tony's leadership, eight national wildlife refuges are engaging in structured decision-making and adaptive management workshops to resolve controversial and complex management issues.

Since 1996, Tony has been responsible for the Northeast Region's land acquisition program, first as Regional Realty Officer, then as Regional Chief of National Wildlife Refuge System. During that fourteen year period, 122,390 acres were added to the National Wildlife Refuge System in the 13-state Northeast Region. This represents 23 percent of all lands protected by Northeast Region Refuges, now totaling 523,117 acres.

One of Tony's most enduring legacies is his commitment to recruit and mentor the best and brightest of our Nation's youth to become America's future conservation leaders. Tony's goal has been to make the Service a welcoming, nurturing workplace that looks like America. To achieve that goal, Tony created a diversity internship program in 2005 to recruit primarily minority and urban students to work on

national wildlife refuges. Under Tony's leadership, this program has provided summer internships to more than 125 students since it began. This program is now a model for the Secretary of the Interior's Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative. Several of these students have gone on to enter the Student Career Experience Program, and some have now been hired permanently into conservation careers. In addition to the CIP students, Tony led refuges to hire more than 500 students for seasonal and internship position in fiscal year 2010. His focus on building the next generation of stewards will provide benefits for natural resource conservation for many years to come and help ensure the future of conservation.

Throughout his career, Tony has always had his sights set on the future. He has an uncanny ability to quickly assess complex issues, to formulate a way forward, and to clearly articulate his vision to staff, peers, and agency leadership. His energy level is boundless. With all the challenges that confront a senior manager, he has always made his people a priority. Tony is known for his ability to build effective teams, a trait that his peers admire and try to emulate. He cares deeply about his people. He makes sure he includes his staff in decisions, and checks in with them to ensure they provide input so that his decisions are well-grounded.

Tony has applied his strategic thinking and vision beyond the boundaries of Northeast Region Refuges. He is a national leader for the National Wildlife Refuge System, and is a leading force on the Northeast Regional Directorate Team. He has mentored many other up and coming leaders across the Service, inspiring excellence in government on behalf of the American public.